

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 10-12, 20-22 and 27-33 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 10, 11, 20, 21 and 27 are amended. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 10, 11, 20, 21 and 27 may be found in the specification, for example, at page 15, lines 17-20. No new matter is added.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiner Pappas in the telephone interview held December 19, 2006, are appreciated. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interviews is incorporated into the following remarks. Specifically, claims 11 and 20 are amended to comply with the Examiner's helpful suggestions made during the interview.

I. Claims 11, 12 and 20 Satisfy the Requirements of 35 U.S.C. §101

The September 8, 2006 Office Action rejects claims 11, 12 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §101 for being directed to non-statutory subject matter. As suggested by the Examiner during the personal interview, by this Supplement Amendment, independent claims 11 and 20 are amended to be directed to the storage medium. Thus, as agreed during the personal interview, independent claims 11 and 20, and claim 12 depending from claim 11, satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §101. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

II. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The September 8, 2006 Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 10-12, 20-22 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Foley ("Computer Graphics: Principles And Practice") in view of Deering (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2003/0011618A1), and further in view of Griffin (U.S. Patent No. 5,990,904). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

None of the applied references teaches or suggests "the depth cueing area being set near the backward clipping plane of the viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint," as recited in independent claims 1, 10, 11, 20, 21 and 27. That is, the present

invention teaches performing depth cueing processing with respect to the objects within the depth cueing area and unique alpha value processing varying an alpha value of the object on the condition that the object is positioned within the depth cueing area, with respect to the depth cueing area being set near the backward clipping plane of the viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint.

For example, as shown in Fig. 2, the present invention teaches performing depth cueing processing and unique value processing with respect to the objects within the area near the backward clipping plane. In this way, as shown in Figs. 3A and 3B, it is possible to perform unique alpha value processing and depth cueing processing with respect to only distant objects (such as building 20). Thus, the present invention may prevent flickering of the distant objects (such as building 20) and subjecting the nearer objects to depth cueing processing and unique alpha value processing. In this way, the present invention may reduce the processing load. None of the applied references teaches or suggests this feature.

Furthermore, none of the applied references teach sorting objects in succession starting from the object nearest to the viewpoint, performing depth cueing processing and unique alpha value processing with respect to objects within the depth cueing area, which is set near the backward clipping plane of the viewing volume based on a position of the viewpoint, as recited in independent claims 1, 10, 11, 20, 21 and 27.

Thus, for at least these reasons discussed above and those argued during the personal interview, independent claims 1, 10, 11, 20, 21 and 27 are patentable over Foley, Deering and Griffin. Further, claims 2, 12, and 22, which variously depend from claims 1, 11, and 21, are also patentable over Foley, Deering and Griffin for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to the independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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